

# K-GRAM #18

(Final Installment)

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Commander, Navy Net-Centric Warfare Group

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This Sailor's last official date of service will be 01 October 2010. My retirement ceremony will occur on Saturday, 1500, September 11, 2010 at the Parade Field of Fort George G. Meade. This will also be the grand occasion for a Change-of-Command as RDML(s) Jerry Clusen takes over the conn of the NNWG. What I have to write below is intended as my way of saying "thanks" to everyone who has touched my naval career in some way, shape or form; I will invariably miss many wonderful folks, but it is purely unintentional.

What has thirty-eight years of Navy service meant, not only to me, but to all of those who ply the craft of cryptology?

During my formation as a very young seaman recruit, it meant learning the "*dits and dahs*" originated by Samuel Finley Breese Morse on an early computer learning system nicknamed "Ralph." I moved on to standing watches in the fleet using (more than just my thumbs) an old Underwood typewriter (affectionately known as a "mill") while "surfing" the RF waves with a venerable old R-390 radio receiver. Professionally, it also meant becoming knowledgeable about radio wave propagation, basic traffic analysis, and target studies.

Accelerate the clock forward to 2010 where we now are almost totally reliant upon computers, satellites and other electronic marvels that do the work of

yesteryear. Funny how we as fledgling Communications Technician “R-branchers” were always told when we were not quite making adequate progress in our code speed --- and usually in a loud mocking voice by the Chief Petty Officer during “A” school in Pensacola --- that *“if a monkey sat at your typewriters long enough it would eventually type out Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address.”* Yes, Chief, very funny. I promised then to make you proud despite your negative admonitions.

We certainly have come a long way in technology ... and most assuredly with our techniques for individual motivation and leadership skills!

Whether officer or enlisted, mathematician, manual morse operator, linguist, secure communicator, non-morse signals specialist, maintenance, or administrative specialist, we all contributed to the art of cryptology.

Today, it is time to make way for the fledgling Information Dominance Corps (the “IDC”). The Navy’s IDC is all about treating information and networks as a warfare area, so we will require great minds who know computer science, satellite and space technology, mathematics, engineering, network specialists, and we also still need those skilled in strategic thinking, leadership, administration and finance.

My days of floating about in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean aboard the aircraft carriers of a bygone era, the USS America, the USS Oriskany, and the USS Coral Sea, are, sadly, long gone.

My days of weekend drills and two weeks a year of active duty are now consigned to my personal history logs. Gee, remember when reservists only performed that minimal level of duty?

My days as a senior officer and as a flag officer flew by like nobody’s business. My old Latin professor at Michigan State University might be reluctantly proud that at least I still remember the phrase, *“tempus fugit,”* time flies. Indeed.

Throughout my military and civilian careers I have had many moments to study the various leadership styles of those who have been my mentors. My own “style,” if you will, has always been fashioned from the following quotation:

*“When much has been given a man, much will be required of him.  
More will be asked of a man to whom more has been entrusted.”  
(Luke 12:48)*

I have indeed been very blessed in my life. I absolutely believe in service to others. However, it can never be self-serving. To help another is one of the noblest acts available to us as humankind. I can only hope that my service over the past thirty-eight years has met that personal expectation to all of my Shipmates.

Permit me to say thanks to some wonderful people:

To my wife, Mary, of twenty-nine years last month – she, like other Navy spouses has had to put up with a lot: thirty years of drills, AT’s, ADT’s, and IDTT’s, the many hours of Navy work at home at night at the kitchen table, phone calls from “strangers” who call me “Sir,” and to top it off, I had to go and make flag rank! Fortunately, we have made many great friends along the way;

To my daughter, Andrea, my micro-biologist and research scientist, I apologize for causing you so much worry when I left for Navy duty while you were a little girl in elementary school; and, to my daughter, Julia, my chemical engineer (she works for Shell, not BP), I thank you for laughing so often about my constant use of Navy acronyms to the point where you asked for, received, and now treasure your childhood book gift from me, the ubiquitous, “DIC-NAV-AB;”

To my late father, John, U.S. Army Private First Class, WWII, company clerk, veteran of the North Africa Campaign, European Theatre. He told me not to join the Army because a soldier’s life naturally involved dirt, living in tents, and eating K-rations. He told me to join the Navy where ships were always clean,

the bunks were comfortable, and you got to eat steak and lobster every day in the chow hall. He was correct at least on one point, it was clean;

To Electrician's Mate First Class Lee, my recruit company commander. I thank you for pushing hard on an impressionable 17-year-old at boot camp so many years ago in Orlando, Florida. Please note that running long distances and completing that horrid obstacle course is no longer a problem for me;

I must thank each of my Reserve Component flag predecessors for laying the foundation that has brought us to the "Total Force" point we enjoy today:

1. RDML William D. Masters
2. RADM James B. Plehal
3. RADM Robert H. Weidman
4. The late RADM Thomas E. Courneya (fellow Spartan, and believe it or not, was the man who gave me my enlistment oath into the Navy when he was a LCDR on June 10, 1972; amazingly, we both became the senior RC cryptologic or now called, "IW," flag officer)
5. RADM William J. Miles, and
6. The first Reserve Component "cryppie" flag officer, RADM Nelson O. Heyer;

To each and every one of our NNWG family who has served on mobilization and those In Harms' Way yesterday, today, and tomorrow, I will always be in your debt. You've had to place on hold your family life and careers. This nation owes you much more than it can ever re-pay. Also, to the families and loved ones of those who have been called --- thank you for YOUR service and keeping things operating smoothly at home;

To my relief and soon-to-be Rear Admiral, CAPT Jerry Clusen, and to CAPT Patrick J. Murphy, my two Deputy Commanders ... Gentlemen, I could not have

done it without you. Patrick, best wishes and congratulations on your upcoming retirement in January;

To my two Vice Commanders, my “running buddies,” newly retired CAPT Bill Rothwell, and the NNWG’s other soon-to-be Rear Admiral, CAPT Jim Rodman, thanks for helping me bring together our two great commands three years ago: the Space and Network Warfare Program (SNWP) and the Naval Reserve Security Group Command (NRSGC). Your respective sense of teamwork, professionalism and loyalty are without equal;

To my two Command Master Chiefs, CTRCM Pam Buelow and CTRCM Allen Banks; you’re both the epitome of professionalism, and THE source of incredible guidance, loyal support, and gentle educators of an admiral, I will never be able to re-pay this debt either;

To my IW “Boss,” RADM Ned Deets, now Commander of Naval Network Warfare Command, thanks first for selecting me to this role I will soon leave, but more importantly for trusting me and all of your part-time Sailors to get the job done;

To my former Active Duty “Boss,” VADM Denby Starling, ditto. You may have “only” been an aviator as you were known to often say to us, but guess what; you’ve earned your “cryppie stripes” many times over;

To my Reserve Component “Boss,” VADM Dirk Debbink. The part-time Sailors of the NNWG are without a doubt – *“Ready Now. Anytime, Anywhere;”*

To my current AC “Boss,” RADM Tom Meek, I only wish this fellow Spartan (yes, I do remember that you are part Wolverine ...) could stay around to help build the RC IW portion of the IDC. But, you are in good hands with RDML(s) Clusen;

To my other AC “Boss,” VADM Barry McCullough, these are extraordinary times, you are leading the very best the Navy has to offer;

To VADM Jack Dorsett, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Dominance (N2/N6); as you know, Sir, change is difficult for most people, but the NNWG is with you 100% on the Information Dominance Corps initiative;

To RDML Gordon Russell, my INTEL brother, I appreciate your candor, professionalism and friendship. Best of luck in your important new role within Navy Cyber Forces Command;

To my unit CO's and Senior Enlisted Leaders --- full speed ahead, this is where the rubber hits the road with our Sailors. I have enjoyed all of my unit visits. Keep them working OPS;

To the Chief's Mess --- you all are the lifeline that all officers and junior enlisted rely upon for expertise and deck-plate leadership; my only regret in life is that I was never able to become a Navy Chief;

To my Executive Workforce staff, past and present --- what can I say; we have run a highly efficient and effective RC Echelon IV command entity with predominantly a dedicated group of part-time patriots. Smoke and mirrors? No way. It was all unselfish hard work; and,

To Mr. Ron Whittle, Mr. Tyler Davenport, Ms. Brenda Devaul, and Mr. Dave French, you are each the best of class in civilian support, no question about it.

At this point for me, it is all over but the shouting. In a few short weeks, on 01OCT10 at the National Cryptologic Museum, CAPT Jerry Clusen will become a flag officer in the United States Navy. Please know that only a very few have the honor and privilege to serve this nation in such a capacity. CAPT Clusen and CAPT Jim Rodman have many wonderful and exciting opportunities and challenges to look forward to over the next three years. I wish them both, God Speed. BRAVO ZULU, Gentlemen!

Rear Admiral Select Clusen is a fellow Vietnam Veteran. He wears a Combat Action Ribbon for that active duty period a long time ago. Many do not realize

that he was also a Navy Chief. He is a native of the Great State of Wisconsin. He is now retired from the Kimberly-Clark Corporation ... but I will resist making any jokes about those personal hygiene products that he was in charge of producing at that plant.

Rear Admiral Select Clusen served as my Executive Officer back in our former NR Great Lakes unit days. He also served as my Deputy Area Commander in our old NR Security Group Central Region days. And, he has been my Deputy at the Navy Net-Centric Warfare Group Command for the past two-and-one-half-years. Admiral select, the Navy Net-Centric Warfare Group Command is all yours. You are no longer the bridesmaid, you are finally the bride!

In closing, ...

Sadly, I realize that I will no longer rate my three favorite personal perks of command: a primo parking space with my name on it everywhere I go, a listing of the local Catholic Churches and times for mass at each location that I visit, and a cup of hot Earl Grey tea that magically seems to appear at my desk each morning.

Sadly, I will no longer have the daily or monthly close camaraderie of my Shipmates, my Navy Family. But, I now look forward to observing from afar all those taking the watch for me. I am absolutely certain that our Navy is in good hands.

Happily, I am now looking forward to a life where I will only have one full-time job.

Happily, I am now looking forward to being able to use all of my Spartan Football tickets each fall.

“Fair Winds and Following Seas” has never meant so much to me as it does at this point.

**May God Bless our great Navy and the United States of America!**

**TFK BT K**